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## Vikings grab momentum, don't let up

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By **Chris Pall**Special to the beacon news

GENEVA -- The 14-foot dagger behind the south end zone here at Burgess Field said it all Friday night - MOMENTUM.

From the opening kickoff, the Geneva Vikings grabbed the reigns and carried that symbolic piece of carpentry to a 42-14 victory over visiting Grant of Fox Lake in the first round of the Class 6A playoffs. Geneva, which improved to 9-1 and awaits the winner of Hubbard and Fenwick, scored on five of its six first-half possessions while shutting out the Bulldogs for a 35-0 advantage at the break.

"A buddy of mine showed up at my doorstep with that and he said, 'I think you need a little more momentum,'" explained Geneva coach Rob Wicinski. "We got a smaller sword, but he put that big thing out there." It was a nice plus, but it showed the kids what we've been talking about. "Attempting to steal the momentum, the Bulldogs, who concluded their season with a 5-5 mark, attempted an onside kick on the opening kickoff. But Eric Strauss was there to cover it at the Viking 48. Eight plays later, Chris Modjeski followed fullback Pat Schiller into the end zone, and Brian Maurovich added the first of his six extra points for a 7-0 lead with 8:42 remaining in the first quarter.

After marching to the Viking 23, the Bulldogs turned the ball over on downs and Geneva was on the move. Shaun Ratay (12-for-15, 221 yards) hit Modjeski for a 13-yard gain and Modjeski followed with a 25-yard run before Ratay scrambled for 8 more. Ratay then threaded the needle to Michael Mayszak (four catches for 131 yards) on a hitch and go for a 32-yard score. The Vikings' defense forced punts on the Bulldogs' next three possessions, while the offense continued to pour it on. Grant managed just 15 rushing yards on 18 attempts in the first half while the Vikings gathered 115 yards on 17 carries.

"Our defense has been strong all year, and even the game we lost (a 24-6 defeat to Batavia last week) they were strong. It's real important to come out strong in any game. That first series is extremely important and all year it's been that way." Behind the Vikings' offensive line of Alex Wetters (center), Ryan McMillin (guard), Matt Francis (guard), and tackles Dustin Douell and Taylor Reed, Modjeski gained 75 yards on 11 totes while scoring a pair of touchdowns in the first two quarters.

"They're the best line; the holes are always there," Modjeski said. Modjeski helped break the Bulldogs with a halfback pass to Ratay who wandered alone down the left side line. Seeing his quarterback wide open, Modjeski lofted a high pass for the 6-foot-7 Ratay and a 13-yard score.

Modjeski made it 28-0 at the 4:30 mark of the second quarter with a 1-yard plunge that culminated a 55-yard drive.

With 24 seconds remaining in the first half, the Vikings took possession at their own 30. Not giving away momentum, the Vikings went for the kill. Ratay scrambled to his right before stopping and launching a bomb down the sideline for Mayszak, who was caught at the 5. Running play action on the next play, Ratay found tight end Aaron O'Connell for a 35-0 cushion with 8.2 ticks left to intermission.

"We always run it in practice and we were wondering when we were going to do it," Modjeski said. Shaun came in smiling and I knew the play was called. "With momentum on their side, the Vikings can keep on smiling.

**High School Football: Geneva 42, Fox Lake Grant 14**